



DATE: April 11, 2012

Mr. L.C. (Buster) Evans  
1120 Dahlonega Highway  
Cumming, GA 30040

Dear **Mr. Evans:**

Thank you for submitting your system-level technology plan to the Georgia Department of Education. The **Forsyth County School District** technology plan meets all the required criteria posted at ([http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/documents/technology/state/tech\\_planning\\_rubric.pdf](http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/documents/technology/state/tech_planning_rubric.pdf)) and is **approved from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2015**. Keep this official approval with your records for audit purposes of the following programs:

- E-Rate discounts – Federal program
- Enhancing Education through Technology (EdTech) Grants – Federal ESEA, Title II-D.

Sincerely,

Kathy Platt, Associate Superintendent of Instructional Technology  
Georgia Department of Education  
Instructional Technology  
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PK: CJ

CC: Ms. Jill Hobson

*"Making Education Work for All Georgians"*

***Forsyth County Schools***  
Cumming, Georgia

**Three-Year Technology Plan**  
**July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2015**

**Superintendent**  
L.C. (Buster) Evans

## I. Vision for Technology Use

### Mission Statement

**The mission of Forsyth County Schools is to prepare and inspire all students to contribute and excel.**

Forsyth County Schools will maximize technology to positively impact student achievement and system level initiatives. Technology will be utilized by students and adults to produce quality work and to create an environment where there is excellence in student academic performance and where adults support the understanding that all work is related to creating a school district that is safe, caring and responsive to stakeholders needs. The school district will display a belief that technology is imperative to the work of students and adults and will provide the resources necessary for an effective and efficient operation to achieve results.

The Georgia State Board of Education has adopted the National Educational Technology Standards for Students (NETS-S). Forsyth County Schools has implemented these standards throughout the curriculum. Students will demonstrate mastery of the NETS-S at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade via the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Assessment.

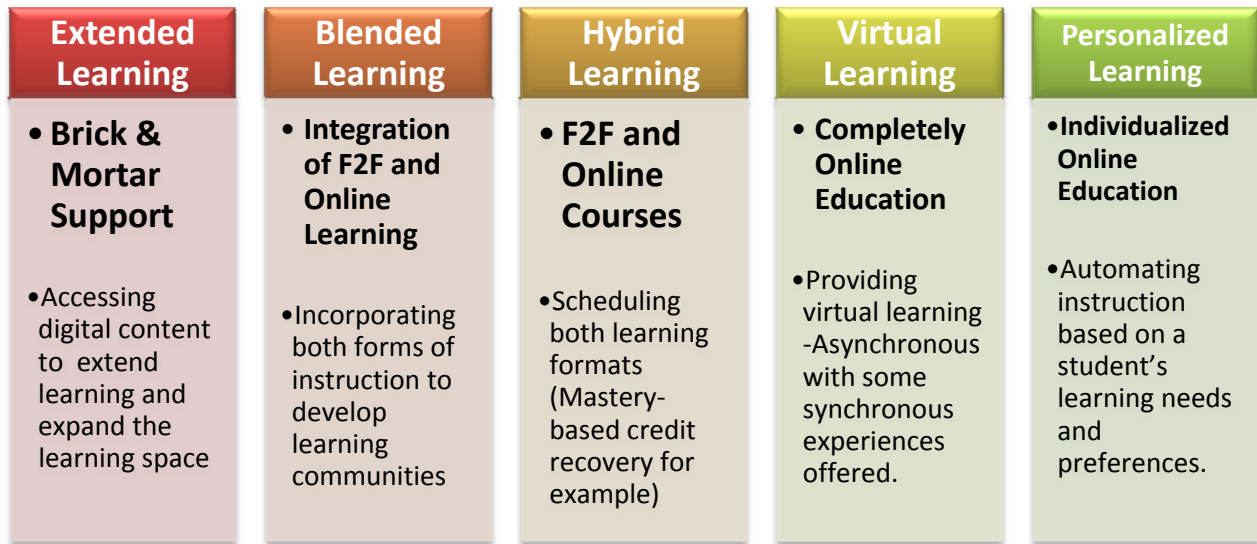
### Vision

#### **Quality Learning and Superior Performance for All**

These are the strategic planning goals for Forsyth County Schools:

- **Goal #1:** Increase all student achievement while expanding educational opportunities.
- **Goal #2:** Recruit, develop and retain a highly qualified workforce.
- **Goal #3:** Enhance educational programs through increased community involvement.
- **Goal #4:** Communicate effectively both internally and externally.
- **Goal #5:** Pursue and secure alternate funding and resources while maximizing operational efficiency.

#### **Delivering Rigorous Academic Courses – FCS Online Learning Continuum**



### Descriptions of Facets of the FCS Online Learning Continuum

**Extended Learning-** The district has been using a learning management system (LMS) since 2002, and the LMS has increasingly become the infrastructure for educating students along the continuum of Online Learning. Currently, FCS is using the LMS, ANGEL Learning System with all grade levels in its brick and mortar school buildings. The students are able to access digital content within the LMS from home or school to support their learning within the face-to-face classroom. This practice extends learning opportunities beyond the school environment.

**Blended Learning-** FCS is the first major school system in the southeast to adopt a blended learning approach system-wide. The teachers and students are able to use the features and tools of the LMS to work collaboratively as learning communities. The teachers are able to utilize this system to organize units of inquiry and map them to standards; then they can also create learning games, communicate with students, and develop assessments related to those units. Students are able to communicate with each other, complete assignments collaboratively and individually, and post their work within the system.

**Hybrid Learning-** Some FCS students, are enrolled within face-to-face schools but complete online classes for part of the day. Some reasons for this hybrid enrollment are due to credit recovery, scheduling, and expanding course options.

**Virtual Learning-** In 2010, FCS opened iAchieve Virtual Academy. This school is Georgia's first full-time online school operated by a public school district that offers a high school diploma. FCS employs and trains its own teachers for this virtual school. iAchieve Virtual Academy is open for students in grades 6-12. This school offers students the opportunity to engage in a digital learning environment to achieve their individual potential through innovative, flexible, socially-connected, and student-focused education.

**Personalized Learning-** The district was selected by the U.S. Department of Education as one of 49 grantees for a 2010 Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) grant. FCS is the only recipient in Georgia and one of twelve public school districts in the nation to be a grantee. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to develop a personalized online Learner Plan for every student in the district.

## II. Current Reality

### Access to Technology

The district currently supports 18,259 Windows based computers (source: 2010 GADOE Technology Inventory see: <http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/TechSurveyReports/2010/658.pdf>). All schools are connected to the wide area network with a gig Ethernet connection with a 100 MB download and upload bandwidth speed (339 MB aggregate) connection to the Internet. Every classroom in the district has four modern computers connected to the Internet. Each permanent classroom is outfitted with an interactive whiteboard, mounted projector, and sound system. Every high school and middle school has at least one computer lab with 30 modern computers and every school has access to seven to twelve mobile laptop labs that consist of ten modern laptop computers and a network printer. Every school also has at least ten stand alone laptops that can be designated for student checkout. Every school has a wireless network connection throughout the building. Full-time teachers have a notebook computer with email and Internet access. Every teacher has an email account and storage space on the Storage Area Network. Students have individual network accounts with storage space on the Storage Area Network

Each school is assigned an instructional technology support team which includes an Instructional Technology Specialist and a Media Specialist. Both have experience using a wide variety software and hardware as a classroom teacher and in preparing and conducting technology-related professional learning classes. This team is innovative in the way they integrate technology to enhance the educational process. Both members of the team are leaders in the building and in the district. The school-based Instructional Technology Team serves as the conduit for planning, communicating and achieving district initiatives and often is part of the school's leadership team. They oversee the use of multimedia equipment such as scanners and digital cameras as well as instructional equipment such as student response systems, digital microscopes and document cameras; provide technology support for the computers in the school as well as manage access to software, the Internet and other network resources such as video streaming.

Teachers have a wide variety of software applications to assist in the teaching and learning of students to increase the creation of engaging lessons that impact student achievement. The Microsoft Office Professional suite is installed on every classroom desktop, student laptop and teacher laptop. Additional district supported software includes ActivInspire, Adobe Creative Suite (Middle and High School), Audacity, Frames (Elementary School), Geometer Sketchpad (Middle and High School), Google Earth and Sketchup, Graph Club (Elementary School), Inspiration, Kidspiration, Photostory, Pixie 2 (Elementary School), and Windows Movie Maker.

## Technology Use

### *Instructional/Administrative Uses*

In each school in the district, all teachers and administrators are provided equal access to technology resources and technology services. Equivalent hardware, software applications, and training are provided to every school. Within each classroom the following technology devices are available: an interactive whiteboard that is connected to the teacher's laptop computer and a projector; four student desktop computers; a scanner; and a sound system. Within each school, additional technology resources are also available for instruction including the following: student laptop computers; digital cameras; digital microscopes; document cameras; student response systems; and a broadcast system.

Software applications have been developed as indicators at the administrative and teacher levels. Teachers and administrators have access to the student information system, Infinite Campus, where electronic records and student data are housed, and an electronic grade book is also integrated into the SIS package. Teachers are required to post grades to the Internet via this system for parental access. EduSoft is a web-based student assessment platform which is provided to teachers grades 3-12. This program enables the district and teachers to track student performance on teacher-created and district-wide assessments. This testing and reporting solution gives the district's teachers the information they need to help improve instruction and student performance.

Teachers maintain courses within ANGEL Learning System, an online learning management system that provides opportunities for synchronous and asynchronous learning. Within ANGEL, teachers publish directions for student assignments; schedule class events on a calendar; post links for research activities; develop discussion forums; and communicate with students via email.

Criterion is a web-based application for improving writing skills through practice and feedback. Teachers in the middle and high school levels may utilize Criterion teachers use with students to help them plan, write and revise essays guided by instant annotated diagnostic feedback and a holistic score.

Forsyth County Schools also provides a host of digital materials to students and teachers. Below is a listing and description of the type of digital content available in the district.

### Digital Textbooks

Georgia law requires publishers who offer textbook adoptions in Georgia to provide an electronic version of the paper book to all schools who adopted their textbooks. (Some of these links will require a log-in name and/or password which may be obtained from the school's department head or the media specialist.) The textbooks are grouped into three levels: Elementary, Middle School and High School.

## Safari Montage

Safari Montage is our digital media management and distribution system. There are three major kinds of content hosted in Safari Montage:

- FCS Learning Object Repository (LOR)– Local-teacher produced material that we have determined is of high value and should be used by other teachers in the district.
- Streaming Video and Learning Objects developed by Safari and 40 other content providers.
- Subscriptions Services– some of our subscription services can be directly accessed inside Safari Montage.

## Subscription Services

- BrainPop- animated, curriculum-based electronic content that is fully compatible with interactive whiteboards, learner response systems, projectors, and mobile devices.
- Gizmos- a large library (450+) of interactive online simulations for mathematics and science education in grades 3–12.
- netTrekker– a student friendly search engine that aligns web pages to curriculum standards and instructional goals making it faster and easier to provide a more personalized and productive learning experience for every student.
- SoundzAbound- a wide variety of copyright compliant music, audio themes and sound effects for grades K -12. The music can be legally used in podcasts, PowerPoint, videos, news shows, video yearbooks, digital storytelling, presentations, TV broadcasts and web design.

## GADOE and GPB Supported Services

- Discovery Education – engaging, standards-aligned rich media and interactive digital textbooks.
- Galileo (GeorgiA Library LEarning Online)- a World Wide Web-based virtual library provides access to multiple information resources, including secured access to licensed products, and thousand of databases, journals and government publications.
- Georgia Public TV– online videos and courses.
- Georgia Virtual School Courses– full courses from GaVS.
- HippoCampus– accessed through Georgia Virtual School.
- GeorgiaStandards.Org– website for the Georgia Standards and Frameworks.
- NETS Standards as Performance Tasks for the GPS– sample lessons using technology available via GSO.

## Web 2.0 Tools

We also have provided links to various web sites and portals containing collaborative tools and interactive learning objects within our learning management system.

## Additional Resources

- Flexbooks - customized electronic textbooks
- PBS Learning Media - digital content from the Public Broadcasting System

- To Excel is Elementary - one of the nation's top sources of using spreadsheet in education.
- Library of Congress - many digital resources and primary documents are available here.
- Khan Academy – a library of over 2,700 videos in a variety of subject areas along with extensive practice exercises.

Access to all of these digital resources is provided to all students and teachers via the Institutional Resource TAB inside the learning management system.

Continual observations are conducted to determine the level of technology integration occurring at each school. These observations assist school administrators in making better decisions concerning professional development to ensure that teachers are creating 21st century classrooms. In addition to these walk-throughs, the district has created an online instrument to assist administrators in recording teacher observations to ensure quality teaching, alignment to district initiatives and standards-based classrooms.

*Parent/Community Uses:*

Parents can view grades, homework assignments, progress reports, and other information provided by teachers via the Internet. Families without a computer at home are encouraged to use the computers in the local library or make use of the school's media center computers. Over 13,000 parents are registered for the online student information system's ParentPortal within Infinite Campus. Parents are also able to replenish lunch money, receive alerts and school notices and access bus routes and transportation pick up times via the Internet. Middle and High School students have Portal accounts as well and can view their own progress at home or at school, in cases where home Internet connection is not available. Advisors or counselors can work with students, viewing their own assignments and performance. In addition, Forsyth County Schools has partnered with Comcast to provide Comcast Internet Essentials which provides a low-cost home Internet connection to students receiving free lunch.

District technology resources at home are accessible to students through Citrix, which enables them to access their documents and files as well as software programs such as Open Office that are located on the network. Wireless arrays have been installed within each school, and the district has implemented a Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT) initiative to encourage students to bring their own personal technology devices from home to access district network resources in order to facilitate instruction.

## Gap Analysis

Forsyth County Schools is a suburban district north of Atlanta, Georgia, is a nationally recognized leader in educational technology as recognized by local, regional and national organizations. Yet, even with superior resources and a track record of innovation, our students, teachers, and administrators have recognized the need to utilize technology resources to facilitate educational opportunities for every student. The data specified in this section are used

to determine how instructional technology and student information might be employed to increase student achievement and student growth.

FCS currently serves 37,285 students in 35 schools with a current growth rate of approximately 4%. The student body is 3% African American, 7% Asian, 12% Hispanic, 75% white, and 3% who identify as two or more races. More than 20% are economically disadvantaged, and 14% are served by special education programs.

Although scores for NCLB targeted subgroups have been increasing over the past three years, achievement for some subgroups continues to lag. FCS considers a student as high need if he or she has more than four of the following longitudinal and current year indicators: (1) not meeting standards on a CRCT subtest, (2) scoring in the 25th percentile or below on the norm-referenced Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) exams, (3-5) a history of retention, placement into the next grade, or being over-age for the grade level, (6-7) participation in special education or RTI due to learning difficulties, (8) more than four disciplinary incidents, (9) more than four unexcused or seven total absences, (10) failing any portion of the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT), or (11) failing any class at the high school level causing them to be off track for graduation. More than 11,600 students in grades 6-12 (34%) fall into at least one risk category and more than 2,780 (8%) meet the “four or more” threshold. Of these students, 188 (7%) are English Language Learners, 972 (35%) Students with Disabilities, 886 (32%) are Economically Disadvantaged, and 1,717 (62%) are members of none of these subgroups.

According to assessment data from 2009-2010, of the students in grades 1-8 who did not meet the passing standard in math on Georgia Criterion Reference Competency Tests (CRCT), 13.3% of the students were considered Economically Disadvantaged (ED); 23% of the students were identified as Students with Disabilities (SWD); and 12.2% of the students were classified as Hispanic. The district-wide graduation rate for 2010 was 90%. For the afore-mentioned identified subgroups, the graduation rates were as follows: Economically Disadvantaged, 73%; Students with Disabilities, 55%; and Hispanic, 79%.

For many years, Forsyth County Schools has made it policy to standardize access to technology across the district in order to prevent a situation where certain schools or classrooms would have less access than others. As a result of this district goal, there are very few if any discrepancies in access. Interactive whiteboards have been installed throughout the school district; however, due to limited funds and a rapidly growing student population, interactive whiteboards and projectors have not been placed in mobile classrooms.

Limited funds have also prevented the district from providing laptop computers to part-time teachers or those who have a desktop computer in an office as their primary computing device. This gap continues to exist as additional funding has not been available to provide more laptop computers. The average student/computer ratio, not including computer labs, is 3:1. The district continues to purchase computers and instructional software for classrooms in order to narrow this gap.

With approximately 19,000 computers within the district, computers are readily available to students. However, there is great interest in moving to a 1:1 computer ratio. The greatest factor that impedes progress on this goal is the lack of technical personnel to support such an implementation. Furthermore, many students prefer to use their personal technology devices rather than school-owned technology tools. Therefore, the BYOT initiative enables students to use their technology tools; although, this implementation has placed a strain on the district's network.

Student access to technology at home continues to be a cause of concern. The district has focused attention on increasing student achievement, using the very limited funding that is available. The individual schools also have laptops that can be distributed to students via checkout from the media center.

Additionally, there is a need for further work on moving away from teaching from traditional textbooks towards more project-based, student-centered learning as evidenced by the results of school observations completed through walk-throughs conducted at all grade levels. Students must have choices in demonstrating their learning. Both online and face-to-face learning and professional development are valued. All instruction must be based on standards, and students need to have opportunities to use mobile technology. To participate effectively in the above activities, the district is investigating ways to provide the students with a safe method for email communication and collaboration.

## Goals, Benchmarks and Strategies

<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Increase all student achievement while expanding educational opportunities.</b>			
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Evaluation Method</b>	<b>Funding Source/Amount</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
Foster innovative practice	Design and expand educational opportunities and experiences for students that will eliminate the achievement gap between subgroups and meet the needs of all learners.	Maintain the learning management system (ANGEL) to provide an infrastructure for the instructional framework of our school system.	Pending availability of funds, \$240,000 annually from general operating funds	Dir of Instructional Technology & Associate Supt for Academics and Accountability
Foster innovative practice	Design and expand educational opportunities and experiences for students that will eliminate the achievement gap between subgroups and meet the needs of all learners.	Provide digital content (BrainPOP, ExploreLearning, netTrekker and SoundzAbound) to support the Forsyth County Schools instructional framework.	Pending availability of funds, \$200,000 from general operating funds	Dir of Instructional Technology & Associate Supt for Academics and Accountability
Foster innovative practice	Design and expand educational opportunities and experiences for students that will eliminate the achievement gap between subgroups and meet the needs of all learners.	Maintain digital repository of learning objects and on-demand video via Safari Montage	Pending availability of funds, \$70,000 from general operating funds	Director of Instructional Technology
Foster innovative practice	Design and expand educational opportunities and experiences for students that will eliminate the achievement gap between subgroups and meet the needs of all learners.	Maintain the benchmark assessment system (Edusoft) to support the balanced assessment program.	Pending availability of funds, \$230,000 from general operating funds	Dir of Instructional Technology & Associate Supt for Academics and Accountability
Ensure a high performing culture	Utilize the Engage ME Instructional Framework outlining standards-based classroom expectations, tools for monitoring classroom curriculum and instruction, as well as a teacher growth and development model tied to student achievement.	Create online tools for Special Education interventions along with fidelity checks to monitor programs on ANGEL learning management system.	Pending availability of funds, \$240,000 annually from general operating funds	Director of Special Education/Director of Instructional Technology

<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Increase all student achievement while expanding educational opportunities.</b>			
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Evaluation Method</b>	<b>Funding Source/Amount</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
Ensure a high performing culture	Design and expand educational opportunities and experiences for students that will eliminate the achievement gap between subgroups and meet the needs of all learners.	Receive a 46% discount through Erate funding on Telecommunications services	Pending availability of funds, \$325,000 annually from general operating funds	Chief Technology and Information Officer
Ensure a high performing culture	Design and expand educational opportunities and experiences for students that will eliminate the achievement gap between subgroups and meet the needs of all learners.	Receive a 46% discount through Erate funding on Internet Access.	Pending availability of funds, \$325,000 annually from general operating funds	Chief Technology and Information Officer
Ensure a high performing culture	Design and expand educational opportunities and experiences for students that will eliminate the achievement gap between subgroups and meet the needs of all learners.	Receive Internet connectivity via the GaDOE STATE Network	State e-Rate Funding	Chief Technology and Information Officer
Increase academic rigor for all	Utilize the Engage ME Instructional Framework outlining standards-based classroom expectations, tools for monitoring classroom curriculum and instruction, as well as a teacher growth and development model tied to student achievement.	Expand Special Education ANGEL group to include instructional resources for special education programs and different disability areas.	Pending availability of funds, \$240,000 annually from general operating funds	Director of Special Education/Director of Instructional Technology
Foster innovative practice	Utilize the Engage ME Instructional Framework outlining standards-based classroom expectations, tools for monitoring classroom curriculum and instruction, as well as a teacher growth and development model tied to student achievement.	Advanced the district's grading and reporting work to address grading of students with disabilities, specifically in the areas of 4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> grade standards-based reporting using ANGEL to distribute information and professional learning.	Pending availability of funds, \$240,000 annually from general operating funds	Dir of Elementary Education/Dir of Instructional Technology

<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Increase all student achievement while expanding educational opportunities.</b>			
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Evaluation Method</b>	<b>Funding Source/Amount</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
Develop core competencies	Utilize the FCS Graduate Profile to align and enhance opportunities to develop student's core competencies (academic and personal) from Kindergarten through Graduation.	Implement NETS-S standards by providing face to face training for all school leaders, instructional technology specialists and media specialists; and provide redelivery professional learning and resources via ANGEL.	Pending availability of funds, \$240,000 annually from general operating funds	Director of Instructional Technology
Develop core competencies	Utilize the FCS Graduate Profile to align and enhance opportunities to develop student's core competencies (academic and personal) from Kindergarten through Graduation.	Assess students 21 <sup>st</sup> Century skills by implementing an assessment for 8 <sup>th</sup> graders (aligned to NETS-S and Graduate Profile) and direct professional learning resources to strengthen areas of needed improvement	Pending availability of funds, \$240,000 annually from general operating funds	Director of Instructional Technology
Design opportunities for success.	Design and expand educational opportunities and experiences for students that will eliminate the achievement gap between subgroups and meet the needs of all learners.	Provide students opportunity for virtual learning via the iAchieve Virtual Academy, initially serving grades 6-12 with expansion into K-5.	Pending availability of funds, \$240,000 annually from general operating funds	Associate Supt. for Academics & Accountability/Dir. of Instructional Technology
Design opportunities for success.	Design and expand educational opportunities and experiences for students that will eliminate the achievement gap between subgroups and meet the needs of all learners.	Implement and sustain 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Media Centers as learning laboratories throughout the state and provide automated media circulation system.	Pending availability of funds, \$35,000 annually from general funds.	Director of Instructional Technology
Design opportunities for success.	Design and expand educational opportunities and experiences for students that will eliminate the achievement gap between subgroups and meet the needs of all learners.	Continue offering online learning opportunities at all district high schools to support both initial and recovery credit.	Pending availability of funds, \$240,000 annually from general operating funds	Associate Supt. for Academics & Accountability/Dir. of Instructional Technology

<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Increase all student achievement while expanding educational opportunities.</b>			
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Evaluation Method</b>	<b>Funding Source/Amount</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
Design opportunities for success.	Design and expand educational opportunities and experiences for students that will eliminate the achievement gap between subgroups and meet the needs of all learners.	Maintain existing equipment to extend useful life span.	Pending availability of funds, \$78,000 annually from general operating funds	Director of Technology Services
Design opportunities for success.	Design and expand educational opportunities and experiences for students that will eliminate the achievement gap between subgroups and meet the needs of all learners.	Continue to provide laptop computer for each full time teacher. Continue to provide desktop computers for the Career and Tech Prep programs.	Pending availability of funds, \$769,357 for last year of lease (2012-2013) and \$140,000 per year each year after that to sustain computers off lease. All funds from general operating funds	Director of Technology Services

<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>Recruit, develop and retain a highly qualified workforce.</b>			
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Evaluation Method</b>	<b>Funding Source/Amount</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
Create and maintain an atmosphere of respect among stakeholders.	Continue to develop talent in all employment classifications through high-quality professional development, mentoring, and other forms of collaboration.	Ongoing collaboration with Student Support Services and technology to implement and refine the RTI Desktop, a custom application designed by FCS employees.	Pending availability of funds, \$10,000 from general operating funds	Director of Information Systems and Support
Foster a culture of opportunity.	Continue to develop talent in all employment classifications through high-quality professional development, mentoring, and other forms of collaboration.	Provided technical and application training of staff. Information Systems staff has completed training in SQL, Business Intelligence Tools, Reporting Tools, and Records Management.	Pending availability of funds, \$11,000 annually from general operating funds	Director of Information Systems and Support
Provide progressive and relevant professional development.	Continue to develop talent in all employment classifications through high-quality professional development, mentoring, and other forms of collaboration.	Recruit and retain the highest quality instructional technology specialists through systemic mentoring (over 70% of current ITS have less than 5 years experience in the role)	Pending availability of funds, \$20,300 from general operating funds	Director of Instructional Technology
Build system capacity to support schools.	Ensure a high performing culture through online professional learning and district-wide collaboration that fosters content sharing, K-12 networking, teacher-centered design, and 24/7 access to learning and production tools.	Provide online Mandated Reporter (Child Abuse) Training for all school staff with 24/7 access to the training on ANGEL.	Pending availability of funds, \$240,000 annually from general operating funds	Director of Student Support Services/Director of Instructional Technology

<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>Recruit, develop and retain a highly qualified workforce.</b>			
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Evaluation Method</b>	<b>Funding Source/Amount</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
Provide progressive and relevant professional development.	Ensure a high performing culture through online professional learning and district-wide collaboration that fosters content sharing, K-12 networking, teacher-centered design, and 24/7 access to learning and production tools.	Olweus (anti-bullying program) monthly training meetings, and lessons and updates on ANGEL.	Pending availability of funds, \$240,000 annually from general operating funds	Director of Student Support Services/Director of Instructional Technology
Continue to build upon leadership development and support.	Ensure a high performing culture through online professional learning and district-wide collaboration that fosters content sharing, K-12 networking, teacher-centered design, and 24/7 access to learning and production tools.	Provide School Community Groups in ANGEL: Recorded Webinars, Learning Object Repositories for housing curriculum and assessments, Recorded Conference Calls, and Materials for conducting/facilitating District Collaboration Days.	Pending availability of funds, \$240,000 annually from general operating funds	Associate Supt. for Academics & Accountability/Dir. of Instructional Technology
Create and maintain an atmosphere of respect among stakeholders.	Provide alternative and traditional opportunities for employees to enhance and advance their careers through partnerships with other educational institutions and internal staff and professional development programs.	Provide in-house endorsement programs at no cost to teachers and utilize the expertise of internal staff in the areas of gifted education, reading, ESOL and Online Endorsement to teach the professional development courses.	Pending availability of funds, \$5000 from Title IIA annually to support Online Endorsement training	Associate Supt. for Academics & Accountability/Dir. of Instructional Technology

<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>Enhance educational programs through increased community involvement.</b>			
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Evaluation Method</b>	<b>Funding Source/Amount</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
Provide and increase opportunities for students, staff, schools and district to serve the external community.	Maintain and enhance opportunities to educate the community on programs and services offered to students of FCS through multiple communication avenues.	Continue work with local media, and share information on district print, website and social media outlets.	Pending availability of funds, \$50,000 annually from general operating funds	Dir. of Public Information & Communications/ Dir. of Instructional Technology
Educate and engage the community to work in tandem with FCS.	Maintain and enhance opportunities to educate the community on programs and services offered to students of FCS through multiple communication avenues.	Upgrade school and district website to updated content management system, and redesign school home pages to push key information and updates to stakeholders.	Pending availability of funds, \$50,000 annually from general operating funds	Dir. of Public Information & Communications/ Dir. of Instructional Technology
Communicate and recognize the quality of involvement.	Maintain and enhance opportunities to educate the community on programs and services offered to students of FCS through multiple communication avenues.	Reserve pages for all schools on Facebook and Twitter. Activated more school sites and provided training and guidance on social media.	Pending availability of funds, \$50,000 annually from general operating funds	Dir. of Public Information & Communications/ Dir. of Instructional Technology
Provide and increase opportunities for students, staff, schools and district to serve the external community.	Maintain and enhance opportunities to educate the community on programs and services offered to students of FCS through multiple communication avenues.	Increase the usage of Constant Contact (newsletter management system) to include more schools and departments to standardize communication vehicles across the district.	Pending availability of funds, \$1500 annually from general operating funds	Dir. of Public Information & Communications/ Dir. of Instructional Technology
Provide and increase opportunities for students, staff, schools and district to serve the external community.	Maintain and enhance opportunities to educate the community on programs and services offered to students of FCS through multiple communication avenues.	Sustain public video streaming presence using Eduvision for BOE meeting videos and provide video channels for schools and departments.	Pending availability of funds, \$16,000 from general operating funds.	Dir. of Public Information & Communications/ Dir. of Instructional Technology
Communicate and recognize the quality of involvement.	Maintain and enhance opportunities to educate the community on programs and services offered to students of FCS through multiple communication avenues.	Continue to provide Engage ME eNewsletter, Teacher Talk monthly webinars, online HS Course Digest, Academics website, ANGEL community groups and Parent Portal.	Pending availability of funds, \$240,000 annually from general operating funds	Associate Supt. for Academics & Accountability/Dir. of Instr. Tech./Dir. of Information Systems & Support

<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Communicate effectively both internally and externally.</b>			
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Evaluation Method</b>	<b>Funding Source/Amount</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
Develop, maintain and enhance collaboration and relationships with stakeholders.	Use multiple and appropriate methods of communication and engagement to reach all stakeholders and every part of the community to gain meaningful input, participation, partnerships and shared responsibilities for student success.	Continue utilization of Parent Portal, IC phone calls, staff email, PTA/PTO meetings, staff meetings, print and electronic newsletters, school signs, surveys, blogs, podcasts, video, face-to-face meetings, school websites and media outlets.	Pending availability of funds, \$385,000 annually from general operating funds	Associate Supt. for Academics & Accountability/Dir. of Instructional Technology/Director of Information Systems and Support
Improve internal communication.	Enhance the use of technology communication resources.	Provide necessary infrastructure to support Shoutpoint by maintaining phone and internet lines to handle large volumes of messages sent to parents.	Pending availability of funds, \$23,000 annually from general operating funds	Director of Information Systems and Support/Chief Technology and Information Officer
Use district technology to engage and educate students, staff, parents and community.	Enhance the use of technology communication resources.	Continue use of social media at the district and school levels with ongoing training, and provide ongoing training on Expectations for Communicating Electronically and Social Media Glossary via ANGEL.	Pending availability of funds, \$240,000 annually from general operating funds	Director of Public Information and Communications/Director of Instructional Technology
Make decision making throughout the district more transparent.	Evaluate Strategic Plan progress using stakeholder involvement and communicate progress using the R4 Data Dashboard and other accountability artifacts.	Continue to expand and sustain R4 Data Dashboard.	Pending availability of funds, regular budget - \$25,000 annually	Director of Information Systems and Support

<b>Goal 5</b>	<b>Pursue and secure alternate funding and resources while maximizing operational efficiency.</b>			
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Evaluation Method</b>	<b>Funding Source/Amount</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
Maximize operational efficiency in all areas of the system.	Drive efficiency and effectiveness by improving central office functions to use public resources more efficiently to better support schools.	Implement digital permanent record process for active students and sustain online pre-registration for new students.	Pending availability of funds, regular budget - \$32,000	Director of Information Systems and Support

### **III. Communication and Marketing**

#### **Communication and Marketing**

The Forsyth County Schools three-year technology plan will be posted on the school system website. Additionally, the plan will be presented at a public Board of Education meeting and will be shared with administrators, Instructional Technology Specialists and Media Specialists.

#### **Integration and Coordination with Long-Range Planning Initiatives**

Forsyth County Schools has guided its work via a strategic plan process since 1995 (see Appendix for more information). Technology planning has been an integral part of strategic improvement in the district throughout that time. This technology plan is reflection of that process.

Meetings are scheduled on a weekly basis among the technology department, system level professional development staff, curriculum, media, Title 1, special education and ESOL personnel to coordinate the implementation of the strategic plan (including technology initiatives).

### **IV. Professional Development**

Forsyth County Schools adheres to a job-embedded approach for high quality professional learning, implemented on district-wide Early Release Days, to help standards-based practices become a reality in all Forsyth County classrooms.

The Forsyth County Schools Board of Education has adopted the National Staff Development Council's standards for Professional Learning.

Schools submit a professional learning plan each year aligned to their school improvement goals and these plans are reviewed by Curriculum, Title 1, Professional Learning, Technology, Special Education and ESOL personnel to ensure fit with district as well as school goals. View the 2011-12 plans at <http://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/Page/28512>.

In addition, the Office of Instructional Technology leads professional learning initiatives in the areas of:

- Grappling's Technology and Learning Spectrum
- Internet Safety
- Engage Me ... with IT

#### **Identification of Classroom Implementation**

In an effort to ensure that all students are technology literate and that implementation occurs within each classroom and at all grade levels; the FCS district has included a spectrum for measuring authentic classroom technology integration, with an emphasis on higher order

thinking. Incorporating the work of Bernajean Porter, administrators and teachers utilize *Grappling's Technology and Learning Spectrum* to identify and design three uses of technology for instruction as an integral part of classroom walkthroughs and teacher evaluation instrument. The three uses identified within the spectrum are as follows: Literacy Uses, Adapting Uses, and Transforming Uses. Literacy Uses denote instructional activities focused on learning technology skills for possible future needs and the instruction is focused on the technology rather than on the curriculum.

Adapting Uses involve pursuing traditional curriculum goals by simply utilizing new technology tools, and the assignments are still teacher-directed learning activities. In Transforming Uses of technology, the instruction is student-centered, and the students strategize to design and create new products that could not be accomplished without the use of technology. Within a transformational classroom, the teacher becomes a facilitator and guides the students as they create their own learning experiences. Forsyth County Schools considers students capable of choosing technology tools to construct original understandings and meanings of the content to possess authentic technology literacy.

### **Internet Safety**

#### *Background Information*

In 2008, Congress passed the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act. The FCC sought comment on specific sections of this act, specifically as it relates to the E-rate program. As a result, the FCC has released an order to define what a schools' CIPA policy must include.

In addition to the CIPA certifications required of schools, the Protecting the Children in the 21st Century Act requires the school, school board, local educational agency, or other authority with responsibility for administration of the school to certify that, "as part of its Internet safety policy, [it] is educating minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response.

The FCC declined to define or interpret the terms provided in the new statutory language, such as "social networking" or "cyberbullying." In addition, the FCC does not detail specific procedures or curriculum for schools to use in educating students about appropriate online behavior because "these are determinations that are better to be made by schools implementing the policy in the first instance."

#### **Procedure for Local Schools**

Beginning in the fall of 2011, each school in Forsyth County Schools submitted an Internet Safety Plan.

Note: Each school updates their plan each year.

Plans are due to the Office of Instructional Technology by November 30<sup>th</sup> of each year.

## **Procedure for the Office of Instructional Technology**

The Director of Instructional Technology maintains electronic archives of all submitted plans. Archives are maintained for a period of seven years.

The Director of Instructional Technology reports to the Chief Technology and Information Officer the status of schools' Internet Safety Plans for the purpose of certification in the E-Rate Application. The Director of Instructional Technology maintains samples and online resources available to schools in the development of the plan.

## **Engage ME ... with IT (Instructional Technology)!**

*Professional Learning for Building Instructional Technology Leaders*

### **Overview**

Forsyth County Schools ITS and Media Specialists are the largest group of professional learning specialists in the district, and their most important role is to serve as thought leaders and role models empowering teachers with the skills and strategies to promote students' 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. The following courses are provided as professional learning for these Instructional Technology Leaders to provide them with a deep understanding and sufficient resources to develop, implement and sustain similar programs in the base school.

The course offerings represent the most requested areas by schools and are closely aligned to Engage Me – Forsyth County Schools Instructional Framework (see <http://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/page/209> for more information), the FCS Graduate Profile (<http://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/page/245>), and NETS-S.

### **Course Offerings**

#### *Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT)*

The BYOT initiative has met with resounding interest from our schools as well as many requests for additional professional learning. This **Engage ME ... with IT** course will cover all aspects of BYOT initiatives from dealing with technical issues to classroom management to instructional strategies that work. Participants will develop a portfolio of resources to share and design innovative classroom activities.

#### *Project-Based Learning (PBL)*

Critical thinking, decision making and problem solving are key skills for all students and are one of the six areas of the FCS Graduate Profile. Additionally, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Assessment data (administered to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students) indicates this is an area for focus in Forsyth. This **Engage ME ... with IT** course will cover all aspects of PBL including developing PBL tasks, managing PBL in the classroom, coaching student work, seven steps of multimedia projects and coaching craftsmanship.

#### *Collaborative Learning with Online Tools (CLOT)*

Our students will enter a work world where they will often work in teams with other people that they never meet face to face but rather must listen, communicate and interact with effectively in an online environment. This is one of the six areas of the Graduate Profile along

with engaging and competing in a global environment. Additionally, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Assessment data (administered to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students) indicates this is an area of focus for Forsyth. This **Engage ME ... with IT** course will cover aspects of communicating and collaborating in our learning management system, ANGEL, as well as other Web 2.0 collaboration tools.

## V. 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Technology Literacy

The portion of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act known as 'Enhancing Education Through Technology Act of 2001' (E2T2) has a goal: To assist every student in crossing the digital divide by ensuring that every student is technologically literate by the time the student finishes the eighth grade, regardless of the student's race, ethnicity, gender, family income, geographic location, or disability.

Technology literacy is the ability of students to use the tools of their society with skill in an ethical, accurate, and insightful manner to meet the demands of the 21st Century workplace and world. Forsyth County Schools is committed to preparing students to learn, work and live in the 21st century by developing the modern technology skills which will enable them to be successful. Our vision is that classroom technology will engage students in asking questions and choosing tools to facilitate real world problem solving.

Instructional Technology within Forsyth County Schools is designed to assist every student – regardless of race, ethnicity, income, geographical location, or disability – in becoming technologically literate by the end of eighth grade, while providing opportunities for all students to improve their technology literacy through 12th grade. The Instructional Technology initiatives are focused on encouraging effective technology integration, promoting research-based instructional curriculum methods, and supporting quality professional development that supports the integration of technology within standards-based academic instruction.

### **Tools and Strategies for Ensuring Technology Literacy**

#### *Implementation of NETS-S Standards*

One strategy that FCS will use to meet the goal of technology literacy is by promoting and infusing all areas of instruction with skills known as the National Educational Technology Standards for Students (NETS-S).

The FCS Department of Instructional Technology developed an initiative within the district to promote the implementation of the NETS-S Standards throughout the district. This initiative, termed Got NETS-S, has been presented to the school board, district leaders, and school-level administrators by the Director of Instructional Technology. Then it is further disseminated within schools and classrooms by the school-based Instructional Technology Specialists.

Along with an overview of the standards, the administrators and teachers within the FCS district review the Georgia Department of Education Draft of the NETS-S Scope and Sequence for grades K-8. Teachers are provided with performance tasks via GeorgiaStandards.org that integrate academic standards with NETS-S Standards at each grade level and subject area. Additional sample activities and strategies have been developed within the schools to address these standards to meet the specific needs of the local learning communities.

### *Identification of Classroom Implementation*

In an effort to ensure that all students are technology literate and that implementation occurs within each classroom and at all grade levels, the FCS district has included a spectrum for measuring authentic classroom technology integration, with an emphasis on higher order thinking. Incorporating the work of Bernajean Porter, administrators and teachers utilize *Grappling's Technology and Learning Spectrum* to identify and design uses of technology for instruction as an integral part of classroom walkthroughs and teacher evaluation instrument.

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